

City of Takoma Park  
Legislative Advocate  
End of Session Report  
**2020**



# 2020 Legislative Activity

- PPP tracked over 175 bills in addition to the Operating and Capital budget for the City.
- **Community Choice Aggregation:** [HB 561 & SB 315](#). This bill passed the House but ran out of time before early adjournment.
- **Municipal Revenues:** priority advocacy for restoration of HURs [HB 1394 & SB 982](#) did not receive a vote. Of significance, [HB 1628](#) introduced in the House only, would have expanded the state sales tax on services. This was the most significant attempt to raise state revenues, but after significant opposition did not pass committee.
- **Affordable Housing & Landlord/Tenant:** Two significant bills did not receive a vote: Stable Homes Act [HB 821](#) (a.k.a. “Just Cause Eviction”) & [HB 790](#) a tax credit for multifamily housing to meet efficiency goals; and one bill that passed, statewide source of income, [HB 231 & SB 530](#).

# 2020 Legislative Activity

- **Climate Change:** The City testified on several bills from renewable energy to greenhouse gas reductions, but no significant bills moved. Of note, [HB 539 & SB 457](#) establishes local government resilience authorities and permits the use of bonds to help finance projects.
- **Traffic Impacts from Purple Line Construction:** Sen. Smith & Del. Wilkins reintroduced [HB 540 & SB 645](#) to establish a tax credit and grant program to help businesses affected by Purple Line Construction. The bill establishing the program ran out of time, but D20 secured \$2 million was in the budget to provide grants through the Maryland Economic Development Assistance Authority and Fund.

# Maryland's 2021 Outlook

- **Fiscal 2021 Budget**

- Significant uncertainty following a year of positive budget outlooks.
- The FY'2020 budget was cut late in the year by \$121 million.
- Estimated COVID-19 economic loss of \$925 million by June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Governor has authority to make budget reductions up to 25%. Reductions of 25% or more require a special session and the General Assembly to pass a revised budget.

- **Special Session:** Unlikely a special session happens unless the budget reductions require it.

- **Major topics for 2021:** Veto Overrides of over 22 bills including Blueprint for Education, Police Accountability, Paid Sick Leave & Adult Use of Cannabis.



# Questions on 2020 Legislative Session



# Police Accountability in Maryland

- Historically: A number of “reforms” were put in place in 2016 following the death of Freddie Gray.
  - Department of Legislative Services full list can be found [here](#).
- Speaker Adrienne Jones announced a police accountability workgroup will meet through the interim and make recommendations.
  - [Website](#) for the Workgroup
  - Members include: Chair, Del. Atterbeary (Howard) & Del. Moon (D20)
  - Meetings are public. First was held 6/23, Next meeting 7/16, Public Hearing 8/6.
  - Workgroup will review:
    - Review policies related investigations of police misconduct, including Maryland’s Law Enforcement Bill of Rights;
    - Establishing a statewide use of force policy;
    - Use of body cameras and MPIA of body camera footage; and
    - Best practices for independent investigation and prosecution of police misconduct.

# Senator Smith Proposals

- **MPIA Reform:** Making complaints and disciplinary records of officers subject to MPIA when a death, shooting, sexual assault, discrimination, improper use of force occur.
- **Civilian Participation** in review of past complaints.
- **Use of Force:** Banning chokeholds and strangleholds; requiring warning before shooting; duty to intervene of other officers, robust reporting, ban on shooting at moving vehicles.
- **Police Training:** Implicit bias trainings including shoot/don't shoot scenarios, polices for implicit bias at hiring and performance evaluations, develop best practices for use of force and de-escalation.
- **Special Prosecutor:** Create a special unit in the Office of the Attorney General to prosecute police shootings resulting in injury or death and misconduct cases.
- **Other Items:** LEOBR reform, lifting liability caps for police misconduct cases, requiring local departments to have duty to intervene policies, ban purchase of surplus military equipment, expand SWAT reporting, civilian participation in review of past complaints.

# Police Accountability Demands of Advocates

- A [sign on letter](#) led by the ACLU of Maryland and signed by over 60 organizations asks for the following:
  - Repeal the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR).
  - Control of the Baltimore City Police Department must be restored to Baltimore City residents.
  - Investigations into police misconduct must be Transparent via The Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA)
    - MPIA currently prohibits access to information about how police misconduct investigations are handled, categorizing this information as confidential personnel files. This allows police departments to hide the details of police misconduct.
  - Limit the use of force
    - Maryland is one of a few states that do not have a statutory limit on police officers' use of force.
  - Remove School Resource Officers in Maryland schools.